

Faculty of Music
University of Toronto

thursday evening series

EARLY MUSIC QUARTET (STUDIO DER FRUEHEN MUSIK)

LUCY CRAIG,
RICHARD LEVITT,
STERLING JONES,
THOMAS BINKLEY,

Mezzo-Soprano
Countertenor
Strings
Winds

WALTER HALL, EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING
OCTOBER 17, 1974 at 8:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

*At the request of the artists, the audience is asked to refrain from
applause between the individual songs in each group.*

I

The Lay of the Fountain GUILLAUME DE MACHAUT (1300-1377)

Followers of early music have become accustomed to thinking that lengthy works are rare before the Baroque. This is not true, although large works — apart from liturgical masses which never were designed for concert performance — are seldom performed today. Machaut has left more than a dozen such large compositions, large in the sense of length not in the size of the ensemble.

The *lai* is an old structural concept similar to the Latin *sequence*, but written in the vernacular. It was cultivated predominantly in the North of France and, to some extent, in Germany as well. Here we have twelve separate melodies of differing length and marked in the manuscripts as “chace a trois”. Machaut *lais*, with one exception, close with the same music as the opening transposed down a fourth. The twelfth section, being one of the even numbered ones, is a canon while the first section, being one of the odd numbered ones, is not. The difference between the two sections — apart from the transposition — lies with a single rest following the first phrase.

The theme of this work is religious and in keeping with a late tendency among the Troubadours following the Albigentian “crusade” when, after the introduction of the Inquisition, the song-writers found it convenient to identify Mary as the *belle dame*. *Ma dame chere* is the Virgin, and Machaut repents his sinful life, requesting a good word at the Last Judgement. Who loves this dame (i.e. Virgin) attains eternal peace. The Trinity is like a fountain, a stream that runs from it and a water-wheel it drives. They are three, but also one; no matter whether the water runs by the glass or by the barrel, it has the same sweet taste. Even if frozen the water does not lose its flavor, even though we can carve it into a statue. This is the water of life, the water-wheel is the Father, the fountain is the Son and the running water is the Holy Spirit.

II

Conductus (13th century)

A unique development of Western music is *polyphony*, the composition of several different lines that are sounded together. The 13th century is the period in which this architectural music came to fruition. Two basic structures appeared: the *conductus* and the *motet*. The *conductus* is like a bird flying past a beautiful landscape: our eyes follow the bird yet we are aware of the landscape, too, and although we do not focus especially on the landscape we take pleasure in it as it contributes to the whole scene. The bird is the text of the *conductus* while the landscape is the combination of lines, the music. Clarity is given to the text of the *conductus* by having the words pronounced in all parts at the same time. Each line goes its own way resulting in a deep carpet of sound as a background to poetry. The text is invariably in Latin but not necessarily religious, for this music was written for 13th century intellectuals.

Congaudent from the CODEX CALIXTINUS

In praise of St. James, Santiago de Compostela, the pilgrim shrine.

Ovarium Fortuna ANONYMOUS (Florence)

Fortune's ways.

Procurans odium ANONYMOUS (Florence)

Hate is the mischief that ruins Man.

Salvatoris hodie PEROTINUS

For the Feast of the Circumcision.

Motets (14th century)

The *motet* can be likened to a tree in springtime full of brightly colored birds each singing a different song. The effect is not cacophonous, but sweet and sparkling. In the motet, each singer has his own text and own melody (the birds) while an instrument binds these songs together (the tree). This instrumental part is *isorhythmic*, which means it is divided into sections, and the rhythm of each section is the same. These sections can be very short (In *seculum*) or very long (Doctorum).

In *seculum* ANONYMOUS (ca. 1260)

Six compositions, three motets and three hockets, all of which employ the isorhythmic tenor *In seculum* in different modal rhythms.

Aucune ont trouvé PIERRE DE LA CROIX (ca. 1280)

"Others have sung before because it is the tradition to do so, but I sing because love compels me to do so . . ." One striking feature of this style is the breaking up of notes into five, six or seven equal notes.

Musica sciencia ANONYMOUS (ca. 1360)

"Music is the greatest science and has many great followers . . ." Remarkable in its large lay-out: three extended periods, in different mensuration.

Doctorum principes JOHANNES CICONIA (ca. 1380)

In praise of the Paduan scholar Francisco Zabarello. Interesting is the marking of each section with an instrumental introduction.

— INTERMISSION —

The Trouvères (Northern France)

Chanterai por mon coraige GUIOT DE DIJON

A woman bewails the fate of her lover who was captured by the Saracens during the crusade of 1198, and lies in a prison in Syria. The unusual chromatic turns of the melody particularly at the lines "car felon sunt Sarrazin!" in each stroph suggests the strangeness of that other world.

De moi dolereus vos chant GILLEBERT DE BERNEVILLE

A love song with the refrain line "J'ai a non mescheans d'amors."

Lasse, pour quoi refusai ANONYMOUS

A woman's lament, possibly with reference to an event in the Albigentian "crusade" in which Simon de Montfort took several hundred prisoners, blinded them and cut off their noses and ears:

"... A touz ceus qui l'ont greve
Dont dex si fort destinee
Qu'il aient les euz crevez
Et les orilles coupees
ensi ma dolor perdrai . . ."

and sent them home led by one who was permitted to retain one eye.

Li joli temps d'estez ANONYMOUS

An uncomplicated, folksy song greeting the summertime.

The Troubadours (Provence)

Baron de mon covit **PEIRE VIDAL** (d. ca. 1215)

The poet is proud of his accomplishments in tournament and in courtly love.

Lo ferm voler quel cor m'intra **ARNAUT DANIEL** (d. 1199)

This is the earliest *sestina*, the one praised by Dante and a form imitated extensively by the Italians. There are six six-line coblas plus one three-line tornada. In each stroph occur the same six rhyme words, each time in a different order, and each time beginning with the one employed last in the previous stroph. The imparting of the sense of the poem must match the structure, in this case the intimacy of love is broken by the resistance of external reality, while the poet's heart of flesh remains true. The six rhyme words are: cambra (chamber), intra (enter), oncle (uncle), on gla (fingernail), verga (stick) and arma (soul).

Ples de trestor **GIRAUT RIQUIER** (d. 1292)

A planh or lament on the death of the "senhor ne Narbona" written 1270.

Ab joie **BERNART DE VENTADORN** (d. 1195)

A love song written about 100 years before the song of Riquier. Ventadorn is commonly regarded as the classic Troubadour poet.

Records: Telefunken (distributed in America by London Records)

Next Thursday Evening Series — November 21st — The Waverly Consort "Las Cantigas de Santa Maria"

Next Event — Saturday, October 19 — University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra